

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 COME-00 CIAE-00
 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08
 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 /073 W
 -----040915 110848Z /23
O 110816Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5070

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EEWT, BU
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL

REF: STATE 200868

1. WE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT COUNCIL MEETING IS TO BE POSTPONED. WE WOULD HAVE HOPED THAT LACK OF INTEREST ON US SIDE WOULD HAVE BECOME KNOWN EARLIER. BULGARIAN SIDE HAS SHOWN REAL INTEREST IN MEETING SCHEDULED FOR END OF AUGUST. ABSENCE OF SOME KEY OFFICIALS BECAUSE OF HOLIDAYS HAS RESULTED IN SOMEWHAT SLOWER RESPONSES BY GOB THAN US CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AND EMBASSY) MAY HAVE WANTED, BUT OUR UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT AUGUST 4 CABLE, DRAFTED IN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (MFT) WITH APPROVAL OF DEP. MINISTER GINEV (BULGARIAN COUNCIL CO-CHAIRMAN), GOES LONG WAY TOWARDS ANSWERING MANY QUESTIONS. EMBASSY DISCUSSED ACCOMMODATIONS QUESTION WITH MFT AND BULGARIAN C-OF-C, AS NOTED IN AMBASSADOR'S AUG. 3 TELEX TO THE US CHAMBER, BUT LITTLE COULD BE DONE ON THIS UNTIL THE SIZE OF US DELEGATION WAS FIRMLY KNOWN.

2. WE STRONGLY ENDORSE IDEA THAT US CO-CHAIRMAN MAY VISIT BULGARIA LATE AUGUST OR EARLY SEPTEMBER. IT SEEMS TO US THAT VISIT WOULD BE EXTREMELY USEFUL IN CLEARING THE AIR
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AND IN DISCUSSING WAYS IN WHICH COUNCIL COULD BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO NEEDS OF BOTH SIDES. SINCE SOME COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE EVIDENTLY SUGGESTED DISBANDMENT OF COUNCIL (REFTEL), PERHAPS IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO PERMIT SOME OF THEM TO "RETIRE" FROM THE COUNCIL AND FIND REPLACEMENTS.

3. BY CHANCE, SONANDRES AND CLARKE MET WITH GEORGI

TOROMANOV, MFT DIRECTOR GENERAL AND BUSEC COUNCIL MEMBER,
SHORTLY AFTER WE RECEIVED REFTEL. WE USED THIS OPPOR-
TUNITY TO INFORM HIM THAT WE HAD UNOFFICIALLY HEARD THAT
COUNCIL MEETING WOULD EVIDENTLY HAVE TO BE POSTPONED. EMBOFFS
EXPLAINED BOTH CHAMBER'S DISSATISFACTION WITH PRELIMINARY
RESPONSES BY BULGARIAN SIDE, AS WELL AS DISENCHANTMENT BY
SOME US COUNCIL MEMBERS OVER THE RATHER SLOW RATE OF DEVEL-
OPMENT OF OUR TRADE RELATIONS. TOROMANOV TOOK NOTE OF
REMARKS AND INDICATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD BASIS FOR THIS
DISSATISFACTION. HE STATED HE FELT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY
USEFUL FOR MAY TO COME TO SOFIA IF THE COUNCIL
MEETING IS POSTPONED.
GARTHOFF

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, MEETINGS, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SOFIA01628
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780328-0715
Format: TEL
From: SOFIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780873/aaaacjau.tel
Line Count: 75
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 92caf264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 200868
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1766735
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BULGARIAN-US ECONOMIC COUNCIL
TAGS: EEWT, ECON, BU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/92caf264-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014